

## THE LATE THOMAS CAMPBELL.

SINCE the last pages of the August number of this magazine were written, information has been received of the death of one of the greatest poets of modern times—of the poet who has sung in the most touching and beautiful strains of our own history, and whose works have been more read than those of any other contemporary in this country.

The father of THOMAS CAMPBELL was a retired merchant at Glasgow. His youth had been passed in Virginia, whence he returned before the Revolution, leaving several members of his family to share the fortunes of the new republic. The poet was born on the twenty-seventh of September, 1777. When twelve years old, he entered the university of his native city, and, in the following year, gained a prize for a translation from ARISTOPHANES, after a hard contest, over a competitor of nearly twice his age. He was here seven years, in all which time he had scarcely a rival in classical learning; and the Greek professor, when bestowing on him a medal for one of his versions, announced that it was the best ever produced in the university. He made equal proficiency in other branches of education, and, on completing his academical course, studied medicine and law.

He quitted Glasgow to remove into Argyleshire, whence he went to Edinburgh, where he was for several years a private tutor. At the early age of twenty-one he finished "The Pleasures of Hope," which placed him in the front rank of contemporary poets. In the spring of 1800, he left Scotland for the continent. While at Hamburg, he wrote the "Exile of Erin," from an impression made upon his mind by the condition of some Irish exiles in the vicinity of that city; and, with the Danish war in prospect, his famous naval lyric, "Ye Mariners of England." He travelled over the most interesting portions of Germany and Prussia, visited their universities, and formed friendships with the SCHLEGELS, KLOPSTOCK, and other scholars and men of genius. From the walls of a convent, he saw the charge of KLENAU upon the French at Hohenlinden, which he has so vividly described in his celebrated ode upon that battle. Soon after his return to Scotland, in 1801, he received a token of the royal admiration of his "Pleasures of Hope," in a pension of two hundred pounds; and, after a short residence at Edinburgh, married MISS MATILDA SINCLAIR, and settled at Sydenham, near London, where he remained many years, and wrote "Gertrude of Wyoming," "Lord Ullin's Daughter," and several of his minor poems. In 1820, he became editor of the *New Monthly Magazine*, which he conducted with a spirit and ability worthy of his reputation, for ten years, at the end of which time the death of his wife induced its abandonment. In this period he took an active interest in the causes of Greece and Poland; was

three times elected Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow; discharged the duties of Professor of Poetry in the Royal Institution; and laid the foundation of the London University.

For several years before his death, Mr. CAMPBELL produced nothing of much excellence. "The Pilgrim of Glencoe, and other Poems," which appeared in 1842, owed all their little reputation to his name. He died at Boulougne, on the fifteenth of June, 1844, and his remains were interred in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey, on the third of July.

CAMPBELL's poetry has little need of critical illustration. His chief merit is rhetorical. There is no vagueness or mysticism in his verse. The scenes and feelings he delineates are common to human beings in general, and the impressive style with which these are unfolded, owes its charm to vigour of language and forcible clearness of epithet. Many of his lines ring with a harmonious energy, and seem the offspring of the noblest enthusiasm. This is especially true of his martial lyrics, which in their way are unsurpassed. The "Pleasures of Hope," his earliest work, is one of the few standard heroic poems in our language. Poetic taste has undergone many remarkable changes since it appeared, but its ardent numbers are constantly resorted to by those who love the fire of the muse as well as her more delicate tracery. Though more generally read, it is by no means equal to "Gertrude of Wyoming, a Pennsylvania Tale," written in the full maturity of his powers, and characterized by remarkable taste, feeling and tenderness. Nearly all CAMPBELL's earlier writings are popular, and although a more transcendental school of poetry is at present in vogue, admirers of felicity of expression can never fail to recognize the stamp of true genius in one who has sung in such thrilling numbers of patriotism and affection.

Besides his poems, Mr. CAMPBELL wrote "A History of Great Britain from the Accession of George III. to the Peace of Amiens," "Lectures on Greek Poetry," "Letters from the South during a Journey to Algiers," "Lives of Petrarch, Shakspeare, and Mrs. Siddons, several articles on poetry and belles lettres, in the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, and other prose writings, none of which deserved much consideration. His name appears, also, on the title pages of a "Life of Frederick the Great, of Prussia," but we believe he had little to do with the work. His "Specimens of the British Poets, with Biographical and Critical Notices, and an Essay on English Poetry," was published in seven volumes, in 1819, and has recently been reproduced by Mr. Murray. It is a work of great value, containing much admirable criticism, and a judicious account of the poetry in the English language down to the time of COWPER. R. W. G.